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## THE ANTI-SALOON LEAGUE AS A POLITICAL FORCE

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There are but two methods of accomplishing reforms where the action of others is necessary for success. Either the will of these others must be influenced by persuading them that the change is right, or they must be forced to take certain action because it is best for their own welfare. When a moral reform is started, its method is always that of persuasion, but the time always comes when persuasion has accomplished its purpose, and the cause of reform is abated; or it is seen that the method is useless because it is too slow; or enough people have been convinced by this method to make a use of force hopeful.

As in other reforms, the agitation and effort to curb the vice of drunkenness began by persuasion and with the individual. A hundred years ago, men began signing pledges in order to bolster up a weak will, and then set about organizing societies and persuading others to join and sign pledges. Many confirmed drunkards were reformed, and with a true missionary spirit they began to induce others to follow their example. In the United States, seventy years ago, so great was the work done by these reformed drunkards—mainly by platform lectures—that thousands of men and women were persuaded.

Thirty years later, another great wave of persuasion was started, slightly different because it aimed, not at the drinker himself, but at the man who sold the drink. Moreover, it was the women, for the most part, who never drank at all, who were most active. Their method of persuasion was to appeal to the saloon keeper in a public way, through his religious instincts and his family affection, by praying and singing hymns in his place of business or on the sidewalk before it, and by personal solicitation for the sake of his mother's memory or his wife and children, or because of the injury to his customers and their families. This method was successful, in many cases, in persuading the saloon keeper to give up the business, but its greatest success lay in the

fact that out of it grew an organization whose sole purpose it was to combat drunkenness through persuasion. The Woman's Christian Temperance Union has never seriously attempted anything but to persuade children to shun intoxicants, drinkers to give it up, men in the business to get out of it, or legislators to legislate against it. In the hands of this organization, the moral suasion method has been remarkably successful, and the present attitude of the public is largely due to its incessant propaganda.

The first attempt to substitute compelling force for moral suasion is to be found in the formation of a political party with a single plank in its platform, viz., the prohibition of the manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquors. Its avowed object was to put its own candidates in office, pass the necessary laws and enforce them. Many of the leaders in this movement believed it to be hopeless, but expected to gain adherents enough to hold the balance of power. In some cases, this was accomplished, and the old parties were forced to take account of the prohibition vote. The best recognition they could force from either of the old parties was the statement in the platform of the Republican party, in one national campaign, that "That first concern of all good government is the virtue and sobriety of the people and the purity of the home. The Republican party cordially sympathizes with all wise and well-directed efforts for the promotion of temperance and morality." The work of the Prohibition party has been very largely the same as that of other temperance organizations, viz., the changing of the attitude of the people toward drunkenness and the licensing of the liquor traffic.

As a result of all this agitation, and the public sentiment adverse to the saloon, the trade began to protect itself, entrenching itself behind state laws, and for this purpose made a very effective political organization. There was no organized political opposition, and as a result they held the balance of power between the parties. They had early learned that party affiliation must be secondary to trade protection. These liquor men knew neither Republican nor Democrat, but were well acquainted with the attitude of every candidate of both parties on the question of the continuance of the business. The one most friendly got the votes of all. Where both were friendly, the exigencies of politics were allowed to decide without interference. It rarely or never happened that all candidates

were hostile, for the control of caucus and convention was a part of the game. Through the resulting control of the legislatures, favorable laws were passed and hostile bills were smothered in committee or killed by amendment and "joker." The following, clipped from the San Francisco "Call" illustrates the political methods of the liquor traffic's political organization:

The California Liquor Dealer's Association has recently adopted resolutions which, after declaring that the association is composed of retail liquor dealers who have organized for mutual protection for the purpose of guarding their business against unjust discrimination, go on to declare in effect:

1. That the association is opposed to local option.
2. The association declares itself opposed to Sunday laws and ordinances of every kind and character.
3. That it is in absolute opposition to increasing the existing license tax.
4. That it opposes any legislation against the combined grocery and bar.
5. That it is opposed to any change in the present laws unless the change be first approved by the association.

For the purpose of making their opposition effective in the city campaign, the association has appointed a committee of five to see all the candidates and to propound to them the following questions, requiring a direct and unevasive answer:

1. Do you understand the purpose and principle of the California Liquor Dealer's Association?
2. Are you opposed to any of its expressed declarations?
3. Are you friendly or unfriendly to the retail liquor trade?
4. Would you, if elected, vote for an ordinance or amendment to any law in opposition to the expressed wishes of the association?
5. Will you, if elected, support the declarations of this association, as they have been read to you?

The Anti-Saloon League was organized to combat the political organization of the liquor traffic. It was believed, and the event has largely proven it true, that in most communities there were more anti-saloon than there were pro-saloon votes, and if the great mass of anti-saloon votes could be organized, the power of the saloon in politics would be broken.

The natural starting point was the church, for here was already an organization, which, by ideal and aim, by tradition and leadership, was in direct and absolute opposition to everything the saloon was doing. It was already recognized that if the church was right, the saloon was wrong, and that the church must overcome the saloon or eventually be overcome by it. The great obstacle had been that

the saloon did not go to the church, and it was contrary to church tradition and policy for the church to go where the saloon was, viz., into politics. Church forces finally found the answer to the problem thus presented in an agency more or less organically combined with the church, and in its organization rather indirectly responsible to the church which could go into politics and could in time organize and concentrate the votes of the church men and the independent anti-saloon vote against pro-saloon candidates. The organization of the church was effected by having delegates from the different denominations meet in convention and elect a board of trustees. This board of trustees outline the entire policy for the league. They elect an executive committee which is, in reality, a board of strategy, and also a superintendent who is the leader or general of the forces in the field. He appoints his subordinates or district leaders throughout the state. This is the state organization which does the actual work. The board of trustees meet once a year or oftener, while the executive committee meets at least once a month, and in the heat of a campaign will be found meeting very much oftener.

The superintendent has two main things to do—he must keep in active touch with the churches by addressing them at their regular services and having his district leaders do the same, collecting from these churches the funds with which to carry on the campaign. He must, also, at the same time, be ready to counteract any political move of the enemy, and actively carry the war into the enemy's camp. He must be a diplomat, keeping all the churches good-natured and in active sympathy with him, and he must also be a keen politician in order that he may not be tricked and fall. He finds his greatest bulwark and his greatest asset in publicity. He has taken, generally, this motto—that the politician can beat him if he approaches the politician on any side but in front,—and the political boss has not yet worked out a method of meeting a frontal attack. This means that publicity is the greatest weapon with which the Anti-Saloon League fights. They follow the suggestion of Abraham Lincoln that "If you turn a searchlight into a rat hole, it is spoiled for rat purposes." Some mistakes have been made in finding such men for the position of superintendent, but mistakes have been remedied, and a more astute, cleaner, wiser body of men, both as diplomats and as politicians, cannot be found in the country to-day. They

will insist upon refusing to go into a secret conference with politicians. They will let the full church body, which is their army, know everything which is going on. They have nothing to conceal, for they realize that in this policy is their real strength. The politician cannot understand this, for his whole stock in trade heretofore has been secrecy; fooling the people; taking into his confidence only a very few, and making deals and trades.

The people, at first, did not understand this plan of the Anti-Saloon League, but the more they understand it the more strongly will they adhere to the league and give it, not only their moral and political, but also their financial support.

Another source of strength of the Anti-Saloon League is its insistence at all times upon the principle that a man need not leave his party permanently. It is usually sufficient if he leaves his party in a single campaign for a single candidate, for if enough of them in any one district will vote for a candidate upon the opposite party ticket, the next time that candidates are nominated for that office they will find that there will be a man on their own ticket whom they can support. In other words, the representatives of the league emphasize this one point, that not until men are willing to forsake their party in at least one campaign, and vote for a man who is personally distasteful to them, who does not belong to their church and their lodge, and who stands right, instead of a man on their own party ticket who perhaps belongs to their church, belongs, perhaps, to all their lodges, and who is a personal friend, but who stands wrong—until that time comes, the united church forces cannot win anything. But when that time does come, they can get from any deliberative body anything that they choose. It is only by showing the people that this has been the method of the liquor men for forty years, and proving to them that this is the reason the liquor men have won, that anything in the United States has been accomplished by the league.

The league realizes that it can be defeated this year, and the next and the next, but if it keeps up its fight along its own lines it cannot be defeated in the end. It has been found that the political boss must win every time in order to keep his position, and just as soon as the league can get enough men of one party to forsake a candidate in that party once and elect his opponent, that moment the boss is discredited and a new leader must rise to take his place;

but in the meantime, the league has won. The people have come to see that the saloon vote is largely a bugaboo; that if they stand up squarely and face it the power is not so great as was supposed. This is illustrated by a case in an eastern state—a member of the assembly had voted with the liquor men whenever the opportunity was afforded; but the league, while it had made no fight in his own district, had carried on an active campaign in other counties in the state, and had won. This man said to the superintendent of the league: "While I am no more of a Christian than I was last year, while I drink just as much as I did before, you have demonstrated to me that the boasted power of the saloon in politics is a myth, and you have also demonstrated that there are more anti-saloon votes in my district than there are saloon votes; therefore, I will stand with you, both with my influence and vote, if you will give me your support." The wisdom of this move was proven by the event, for he was given support and won, while his colleague from the same district, who took the opposite view, was defeated. Politicians in legislatures have for years, and in some legislatures do still believe that there is no real power that can elect them to office except that of the liquor men. They have been so long elected by that element that they refuse, oftentimes in the face of evidence, to believe that the independent anti-saloon vote is worth counting. But when you have once proven it to such a man, and he finally understands the nature of the power of the Anti-Saloon League, you have made a friend, even though he is a drinking man himself. The fact is, the Anti-Saloon League has never insisted that a candidate whom they are supporting shall be a total abstinence man. They go upon the principle, to put the matter in an extreme light, that it is better to have a drunkard in a deliberative body who will vote right than to have a saint who will vote wrong.

The league acts upon another principle—that when the ordinary American citizen knows the condition of affairs absolutely, he can be trusted to do the right thing. This was most clearly, and in a most spectacular manner demonstrated in the campaign against Governor Myron T. Herrick, of Ohio. Although Governor Herrick had been elected the first time by 114,000 majority, and although he was supported by about 12,000 saloonkeepers and 175 brewers and distillers of the state, in spite of the fact that President Roosevelt, of the same party, had received a majority of 255,000 in

the State of Ohio, nevertheless, when Governor Herrick refused to stand by the measure which the united church forces, in the person of the Anti-Saloon League, was backing with all its strength, he was defeated by 42,000 votes. The reason for it was that the independent anti-saloon voter of the State of Ohio was appealed to directly. He was told all of the facts, by speakers, by literature and by the press. The ministers themselves took up the fight in a very definite way, and the independent voter decided the question for himself. This same thing, on a smaller scale, has been taking place in every state in the Union, and men who have guessed that the people will stand by them if they stand by the liquor element have, in thousands of cases, guessed wrong.

As to political methods of the Anti-Saloon League, the first and one of the most important is its adaptability to circumstances. It is not a party, and, furthermore, refuses to become a part of any party, depending upon the circumstances of the particular campaign and of the particular community to be appealed to. Its first effort in any particular campaign is to get a candidate of the dominant party to stand for its measure, and every effort is made to bring this about. If it fails, it will go to the party which stands next in numerical strength and endeavor to make terms with them for a candidate who will stand right. Generally, it is successful. If not, there is a third party, and in many cases the Anti-Saloon League has taken up a prohibition candidate and has elected him as against both political parties. A case in point is that of Daniel R. Sheen, of Peoria, Ill., who, in the face of overwhelming odds, almost without a following, was elected over both the Democratic and Republican candidates to a place in the lower house of the Illinois legislature.

The Anti-Saloon League has learned well the lesson which the political organization of the liquor traffic has taught it, viz., that in order to win victories it must hold the balance of power. This it is doing in many states, and because of this it has compelled all parties, in many of the states, to nominate candidates who are in favor of the measures advocated by the Anti-Saloon League. There was a time in the history of the reform when not a single politician would appear in an office of the Anti-Saloon League; but that time has long since passed, and now there is not an Anti-Saloon League office in any state but has visits from the politicians of all parties who are either seeking aid from the league or promising



aid to it. A single instance will show the truth of this. In one district in an eastern state where the league had made a fight against a candidate for the assembly before the primaries, the leader of his party, hearing that the Anti-Saloon League would bring out an independent candidate in case this man was nominated, came to the office of the Anti-Saloon League and said to the superintendent: "If you will promise me not to bring out an independent candidate, I can assure you that the candidate whom you are opposing for the nomination will not be nominated." The superintendent said to him: "I am willing to do this, but as an evidence of your good faith call off the attack of the papers in that county upon the Anti-Saloon League." He said: "That will be done to-morrow," and the next day, although the party papers in the county had been very violent in their attacks upon the league and very partisan in their support of this candidate, they came out with articles and editorials directly opposite. The result was that at the county convention this candidate received only 29 votes out of 141, and the man who was favorable to the league measure was nominated in his place and voted for the measure in the succeeding legislature.

Another example of this holding of the balance of power is shown in the case of Newark, N. J., where eleven candidates for the assembly were nominated in Essex County, and every one of them, both on the Democratic and Republican tickets, was pro-saloon. The league made a protest, and succeeded in nominating eleven independents in that county, and although they had but two weeks to make the campaign, nearly ten thousand votes were polled for their candidates with the result that though that county was normally republican, the election was thrown into the hands of the Democrats, and as a result of that, Senator Dryden was not returned to the United States senate. It is such instances as this that prove that when the anti-saloon people are organized, even though they do not win elections themselves, they will prove to the parties that candidates must be selected who are favorable to the league measures.

The league never undertakes to have any opinion upon any question except those concerning the saloon. Candidates may be for one thing or for the other, and in one district the league will support a man who is in favor of a measure not connected with the saloon, while in the district adjoining it is supporting a man opposed

to that same measure, provided both are right on the measures advocated by the league. It is because of this well-known principle and strict adherence to it that anti-saloon voters have learned to respect the judgment and recommendation of the league.

The league never goes back on its friends who are seeking a re-nomination or re-election; its first duty is to protect those friends and re-elect them, understanding that in this way only, can it keep its strength and gain new adherents among legislators. However, where there are two candidates who are favorable, the league never makes a choice, even though sometimes this leads to the charge of forsaking candidates who are friends, and sometimes even leads to the defeat of friendly candidates because of the division of votes, while the liquor vote is solid for a single opponent. In the long run, the candidates will be favorable to the league because of this attitude. It is simply the element of loyalty which, oftentimes, political parties forget.

The league has learned that it is impracticable to depend upon verbal promises from candidates, and that even written and signed pledges oftentimes remain unobserved by candidates after election. When there is doubt in the case, or a man has no record made in the legislature or other deliberative body, it becomes necessary to have a strong written pledge from the candidate who wishes the support of the Anti-Saloon League. Where this is refused, or an evasive answer or no answer is given, the candidate is counted unfavorable. Better, however, than any written pledge is the record made by a man when in office, and that record weighs much more in obtaining a recommendation from the league than does even a written pledge. The league has often been criticised for this, but it is merely following the success which has been achieved by politicians upon the other side for decades. On the other hand, when a man has promised and has failed to fulfil that promise after the election for which the league has endorsed him, if he seeks a re-election, usually no amount of pressure brought to bear upon the league will secure a second recommendation.

After the election, the work of the league is to see to it that the measure which the united church forces wish enacted is carried through. This means constant lobbying at the legislature. A representative of the league is found in every legislature in the country, and it is his business to watch the measure and aid its

rapid movement from the time of its introduction until it finally becomes a law. This requires keen judgment, quick thinking and a knowledge of parliamentary law and of political tricks. The weapon with which he fights in the lobby is publicity. He must depend upon the people at home, and it is his duty to inform the people in any particular district what the attitude of their representative is; who is responsible for the amendment which will kill the bill; who is responsible for holding it in committee and thereby strangling it; who is responsible for its being sent to an adverse committee; and in general, to circumvent all of the tricks by means of which bills are usually killed by an adverse minority. He urges upon the people of any district to get into communication with their representative and urge him to proper action upon the bill; and many instances are recorded where legislators have received hundreds of letters and telegrams and telephone messages in a single day when adverse action has been feared on their part, with the result that they have been favorable. The Anti-Saloon League lobbyist never forgets that publicity is his weapon, and that a full knowledge of conditions at the legislature must be given to the people of the state. He well knows that there is nothing a legislator fears more than the knowledge on the part of his constituents that he is either betraying them or acting contrary to their wishes. Of course, there are no underhanded methods used nor was there ever charged any sort of bribery or other illegitimate method on the part of an Anti-Saloon League lobbyist. The reason is mainly that the character of the league worker forbids any such methods, and secondly, that his constituents are men who will not continue their support to such methods. It is a fair fight on the principle, or the league does not enter it.

The methods of the Anti-Saloon League have been eminently successful in obtaining the end sought, and the reason is not far to seek. Public sentiment has been rising for a hundred years against the saloon, and the attitude of more than a majority of men has been changed from one of tolerance, at least, to one of hatred to the open saloon. There are now between four and five hundred men whose time is wholly engaged in the crystallization of this sentiment into action. They are picked from every walk in life because of their qualifications as to integrity, diplomacy and political leadership. Let any question have the support of the entire

evangelical church; then organize this force for action; put into the field four hundred and fifty keen, bright, able men; let them draw their support from the millions who are in favor of the object proposed; and you can create and organize sentiment enough to accomplish almost any purpose desired. That is what is happening in the political arena to-day as against the open saloon. It is merely the united church forces in action.